

National Elk Refuge News – July 24, 2006

Miller House Pioneer Craft Days



Above and right: National Elk Refuge volunteers assist students with projects.



Volunteer Kathie Van Winkle shows children characteristics of an Amish doll.



Proud students show off their version of a tied rag pioneer doll.

Nearly 100 students visited the historic Miller House on the National Elk Refuge last week, learning about the history of the site, imagining life as a homesteader, and creating an art project representative of the time period. The students were all participants in summer camps and day care programs at Moose Corner Day Care, St. John's Medical Center, and Teton County Parks and Recreation.

Four art projects were completed during the week's activities, varying with the age group of the children. The crafts included tied rag dolls, punch tin lanterns, clothespin figures and mountain man possibles bags. The art projects were assembled into kits by National Elk Refuge volunteers who helped with the projects throughout the week. "We couldn't have done it without the time and effort of our volunteer staff," said Lori Iverson, Outdoor

Recreation Planner. "They had some creative ideas to pull from in order to organize this and make it happen."

Andrew Langford, South District Naturalist for Grand Teton National Park, made a guest appearance at the program that centered around possibles bags. Dressed in mountain man attire, Langford described the kind of items that might be carried in such a pouch, explaining the name by stating its purpose was to carry "everything you might possibly need." The students watched with rapt attention as Langford withdrew such items as a steel striker and flint, packages of dried food, a rifle ball, and a strike-a-light case. The students created their own possibles bag at the conclusion of the program. "I think it was good for the students to think about carrying everything they really need for survival in one small pouch," said Elaine Hamm, the National

Elk Refuge volunteer who took the lead on organizing the possibles bag art project. “It made them think about what is most essential.”

The programs and craft projects were all well received by the students. “We were thrilled to work with the National Elk Refuge on these programs,” said Mike Estes, Recreation Supervisor for Teton County Parks and Recreation. “Any time we can combine an educational program with an activity, the kids come out ahead. We look forward to future partnership program opportunities with the National Elk Refuge.”



Clockwise from left: Students work intently on their own possibles bags; a participant becomes proficient with a needle and thread; Langford shares samples of jerky with the children; Langford explains beads were an important trade item; a few finished projects are showcased.

